

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3216

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR IS LE

SUBJ: EXPANDED MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON

1. IRVING BOREN CALLED AT EMBASSY ON SEPT 23 TO INFORM US OF HIS "PEACE PLAN" INVOLVING INTER ALIA GREATLY EXPANDED MEDICAL TREATMENT IN ISRAEL FOR LEBANESE PATIENTS. BOREN, WHO NOTED THAT HE HAS BUSINESS INTERESTS IN NEVADA AND CALIFORNIA AND IS ON THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF TECHNION UNIVERSITY IN HAIFA, SAID THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED HIS PROPOSAL WITH OFFICIALS IN NEA AND THE DEPT'S DISASTER RELIEF OFFICE. IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS IN ISRAEL, HE HAS MET WITH DEFENSE MINISTER PERES AND WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MAGEN DAVID ORGANIZATION. HE ALLEGED THAT PERES HAD ENDORSED HIS PLAN AND WOULD MAKE A MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENT LAUNCHING THE SCHEME WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

2. IN A NUTSHELL, BOREN'S PLAN IS FOR ISRAEL TO ANNOUNCE A MAJOR PEACE INITIATIVE AIMED AT LEBANON. THE CENTRAL ELEMENT OF THE PLAN IS LARGE-SCALE MEDICAL TREATMENT IN ISRAEL OF LEBANESE SICK AND WOUNDED. IT WOULD SUBSTANTIALLY EXPAND THE PRESENT MODEST "OPEN FENCE" MEDICAL PROGRAM FOR VILLAGERS FROM SOUTHERN LEBANON TO INCLUDE PATIENTS IN BEIRUT AND OTHER EMBATTLED TOWNS IN LEBANON. WHEN ASKED HOW THE PATIENTS WOULD GET TO ISRAEL, BOREN REPLIED THAT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAD ASSURED HIM THAT "IT COULD BE DONE". BOREN IMPLIED THAT

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THE ISRAELIS WERE THINKING OF TRANSPORT BY BOTH LAND AND SEA TO

ISRAEL. HE SAID THAT THE FLEET OF 600 MAGEN DAVID AMBULANCES IN ISRAEL COULD BE UTILIZED TO TRANSPORT PATIENTS TO ISRAELI HOSPITALS AND THAT THE NEW 500-BED CARMEL HOSPITAL IN HAIFA WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR LEBANESE PATIENTS. AS FOR FINANCING, HE SAID THAT HE WAS THINKING IN TERMS OF TOTAL OF \$20 MILLION; SOME MONEY WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE BY THE GOI, BUT HE HOPED FUNDS WOULD BE APPROPRIATED EXPRESSLY FOR THIS PURPOSE BY THE U.S. CONGRESS. TO THIS END, HE WAS WORKING HARD TO HAVE THE PROGRAM ANNOUNCED NEXT WEEK WHILE THE U.S. CONGRESS IS STILL IN SESSION.

3. BOREN SPOKE VAGUELY OF ISRAELI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN LEBANON, AND VARIOUS OTHER FORMS OF COOPERATION WHICH COULD LEAD EVENTUALLY TO A "SIMILAR ARRANGEMENT WITH JORDAN". AT THE END OF THE DISCUSSION, WE THANKED HIM FOR THE INFORMATION AND ASKED THAT HE STAY IN TOUCH. WE MADE CLEAR THAT THE EMBASSY COULD NOT, OF COURSE, PROVIDE ANY ENDORSEMENT WHATEVER.

4. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATIONS WITH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE DIPLOMATIC ADVISER BEN NATHAN AND MAGEN DAVID CHAIRMAN ROZIN, WE LEARNED THAT BOREN HAD CONSIDERABLY OVERSTATED THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR HIS PROJECT SO FAR EXTENDED BY ISRAELI AUTHORITIES. PERES DID IN FACT MEET WITH BOREN, BUT DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF. PERES REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HE WOULD NEED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PLAN WHICH, IN ANY EVENT, SHOULD CONFINE ITSELF SOLELY TO MEDICAL TREATMENT; BOREN SHOULD LEAVE THE "PEACE INITIATIVE" ASPECTS TO OTHERS. PERES DID ASK ROZIN, WHO IS ALSO HEAD OF SURGERY AT HADASSAH HOSPITAL, TO LOOK INTO THE FEASIBILITY OF AN EXPANDED MEDICAL PROGRAM FOR LEBANESE. BEN NATHAN SAID THAT THE APPOINTMENT WITH PERES HAD ACTUALLY BEEN AGREED TO ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT BOREN WOULD EITHER HIMSELF GIVE \$10 MILLION TO THIS CAUSE OR COULD DELIVER \$10 MILLION FROM CONGRESSIONAL FUNDING FOR LEBANESE RELIEF.

5. DR ROZIN HAS INFORMED US THAT HIS STUDY WILL BE READY FOR PRESENTATION TO PERES EARLY NEXT WEEK. IT WILL SAY THAT ISRAEL'S MEDICAL FACILITIES ARE CAPABLE OF ACCOMMODATING UP TO PERHAPS 2,000 LEBANESE PATIENTS IN ISRAELI HOSPITALS. THIS COMPARES TO THE 50 TO 60 LEBANESE PATIENTS NOW HOSPITALIZED IN ISRAEL. ROZIN NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT HE AND OTHER ISRAELIS IN CONTACT WITH BOREN HAVE AN UNEASY FEELING THAT THEY DON'T KNOW ENOUGH

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ABOUT HIS BACKGROUND AND BONA FIDES. HE SAID THAT A QUERY TO THE U. S. HAD PRODUCED LITTLE MORE THAN THAT BOREN IS "A MILLIONAIRE BUSINESSMAN FROM NEVADA". HE ASKED IF THE EMBASSY COULD PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SPECIFICALLY IF THERE IS ANY SUPPORT IN WASHINGTON FOR HIS PROPOSAL.

6. COMMENT: LIKE ROZIN AND BEN NATHAN, WE ARE UNCERTAIN AS TO HOW SERIOUSLY BOREN SHOULD BE TAKEN. ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ABOUT BOREN AND GUIDANCE THAT THE DEPT CAN PROVIDE WOULD BE APPRECIATED. (HIS BUSINESS ADDRESS IS 410 SOUTH HAUSER BOULEVARD, LOS ANGELS.) WE NOTE THAT PERES HAS BEEN THE MAIN FORCE BEHIND THE "OPEN FENCE" OPERATION AND MAY WELL SEE ADVANTAGE TO ISRAEL IN OFFERING TO EXPAND IT. THUS WE DO NOT RULE OUT GOI SUPPORT FOR A MODIFIED VERSION OF THEPLAN, PARTICULARLY IF FINANCING IS FORTHCOMING FROM WASHINGTON.

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